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MILK RUN

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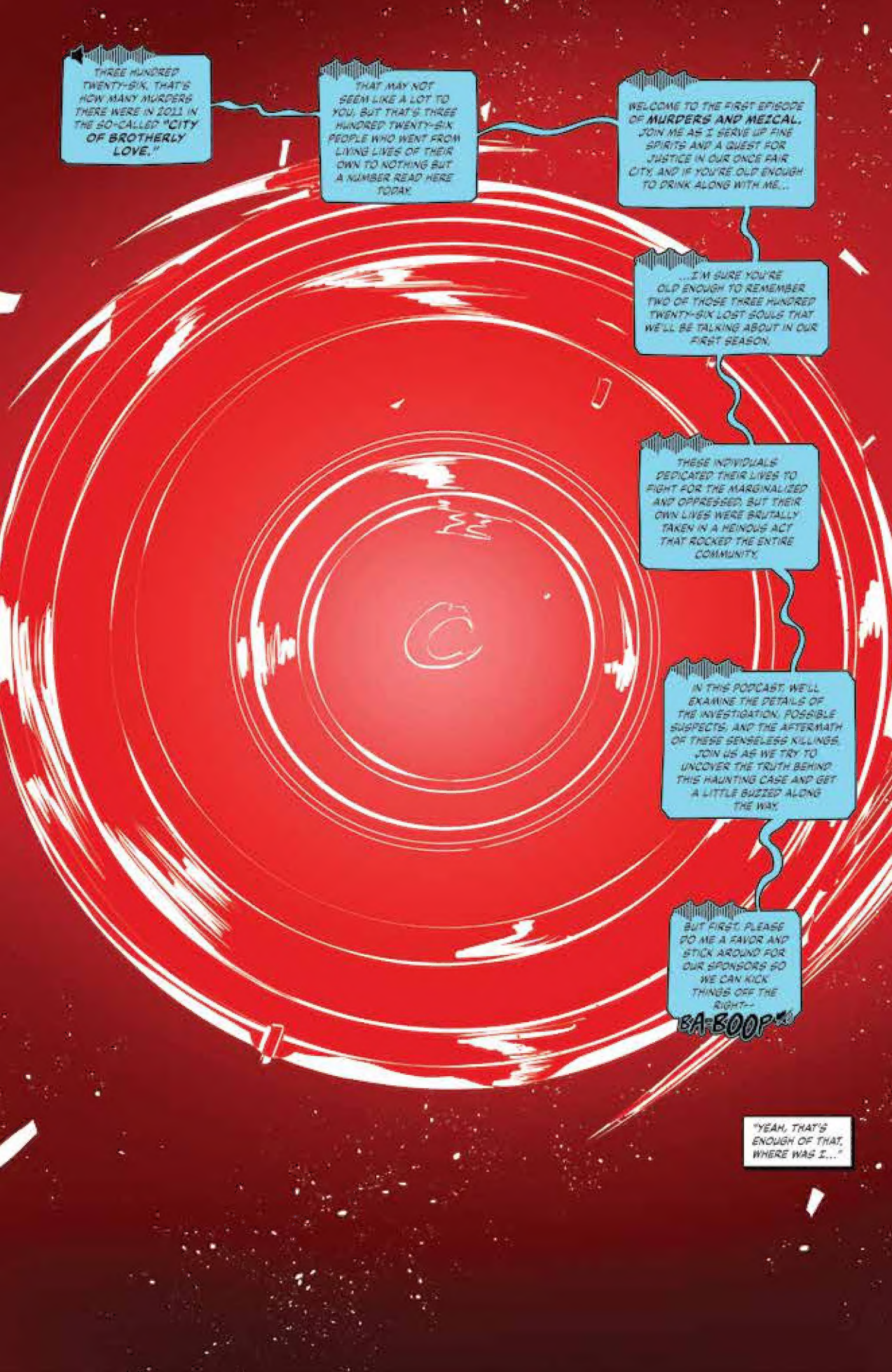

THREE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIX. THAT'S HOW MANY MURDERS THERE WERE IN 2011 IN THE SO-CALLED "CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE."
THAT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE A LOT TO YOU, BUT THAT'S THREE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIX PEOPLE WHO WENT FROM LIVING LIVES OF THEIR OWN TO NOTHING BUT A NUMBER READ HERE TODAY.
WELCOME TO THE FIRST EPISODE OF MURDERS AND MEZCAL. JOIN ME AS I SERVE UP FINE SPIRITS AND A QUEST FOR JUSTICE IN OUR ONCE FAIR CITY, AND IF YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO DRINK ALONG WITH ME...
...I'M SURE YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO REMEMBER TWO OF THOSE THREE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIX LOST SOULS THAT WE'LL BE TALKING ABOUT IN OUR FIRST SEASON.
THESE INDIVIDUALS DEDICATED THEIR LIVES TO FIGHT FOR THE MARGINALIZED AND OPPRESSED, BUT THEIR OWN LIVES WERE BRUTALLY TAKEN IN A HEINOUS ACT THAT ROCKED THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.
IN THIS PODCAST, WE'LL EXAMINE THE DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION, POSSIBLE SUSPECTS, AND THE AFTERMATH OF THESE SENSELESS KILLINGS. JOIN US AS WE TRY TO UNCOVER THE TRUTH BEHIND THIS HAUNTING CASE AND GET A LITTLE BUZZED ALONG THE WAY.
BUT FIRST, PLEASE DO ME A FAVOR AND STICK AROUND FOR OUR SPONSORS SO WE CAN KICK THINGS OFF THE RIGHT--
BA-BOOP!
"YEAH, THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT. WHERE WAS I..."

PHILADELPHIA: 2011
00:15:39
I BARELY EAT CEREAL. DO I EVEN NEED ANY OF THIS SH!--
SKKRREEEK
JESUS. NO MATTER WHEN I COME, I ALWAYS END UP WITH THE JACKED-UP CART.
SHEESH. DID EVERYONE DECIDE TODAY WAS THE BEST DAY TO JUMP BACK FOR GROCERIES OR WHAT? I SHOULD BE GOOD FOR A BIT MORE--
EKKRREEEK
CRAP! OKAY, I GOTTA GO.
00:18:58

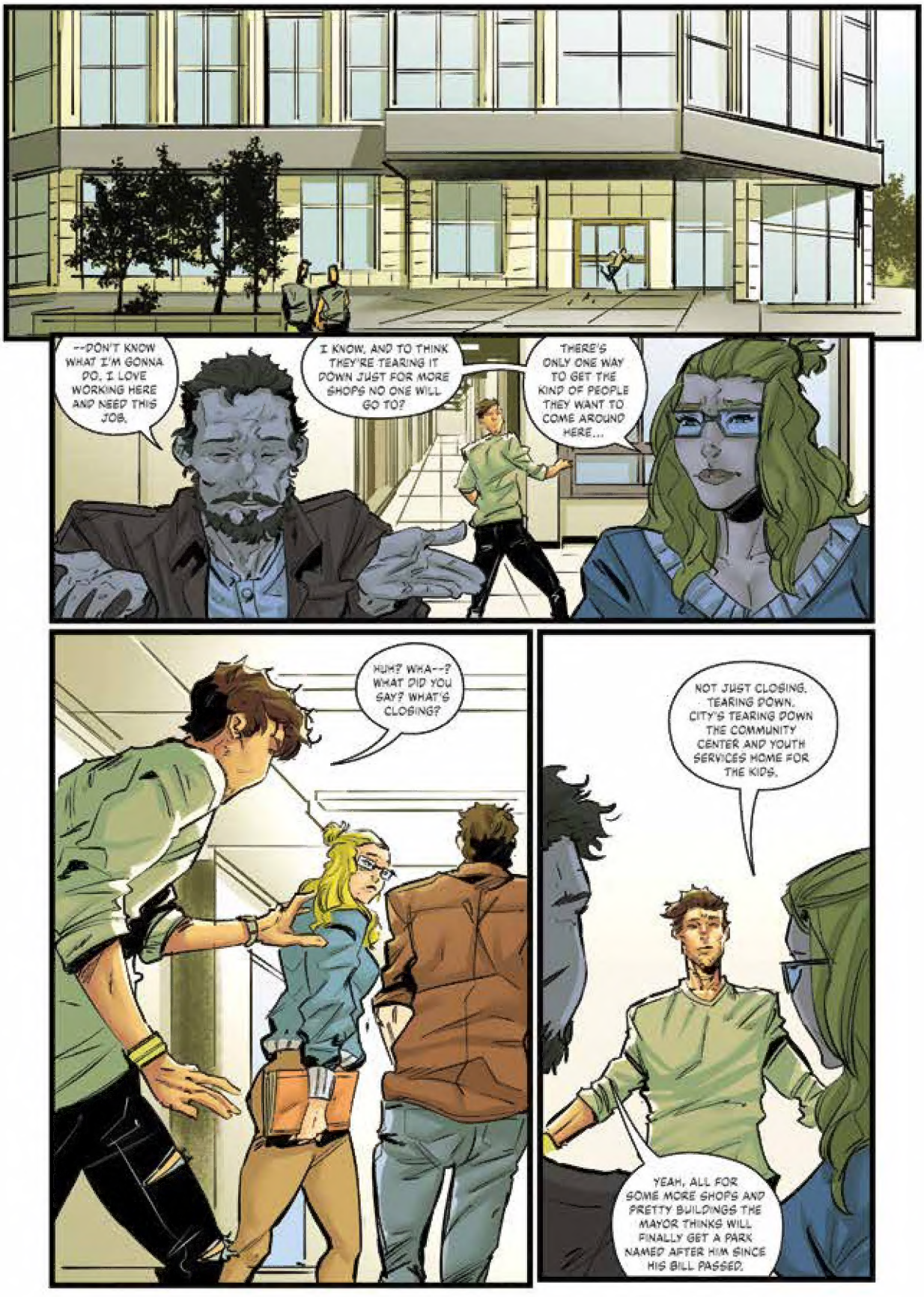
SERIOUSLY, WHY DID I WAIT TILL THE LAST POSSIBLE SECOND TO DO THIS?
OKAY, OKAY, THINK THAT'S EVERYTHING. LEMME MAKE SURE.
YES, YES, YEAH, GOT IT, GOT THAT, MHMM, YES, DIDN'T REALLY NEED THAT BUT GOT IT, YES, YEA--OH NO! WHERE IS IT?!
LISTEN, I'M SO SORRY, AND KNOW THIS IS THE WORST THING, BUT I WILL BE RIGHT BACK. I FORGOT SOMETHING AND NEED TO GET IT.
LOOK DUDE, IT'S JUST ME AND WE GOT A LINE. YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO FINISH UP AND GET BACK IN LINE.
I SWEAR, IT WON'T BE MORE THAN TWO MINUTES. THAT'S ALL I CAN SPARE ANYWAY.
00:05:29
CRRASHH!
00:04:15
GOT IT! OKAY, LET'S GO. SORRY AGAIN.

JUST SO YOU KNOW FOR NEXT TIME, THESE ARE IN EVERY OTHER CHECK-OUT AISLE.
00:03:00
"GOTCHA, NEXT TIME."
WOW, SAVED ALMOST $30 SINCE I DIDN'T BUY THESE BACK HOME, ALMOST A PERSONAL RECORD.
00:02:24
BREATHE, ZACK. BREATHE. GOTTA CALM DOWN TO GO BACK.
00:01:07
FOR THE LOVE OF--
COME ON!
CRACKLE
00:00:45
THERE WE GO!
00:00:28

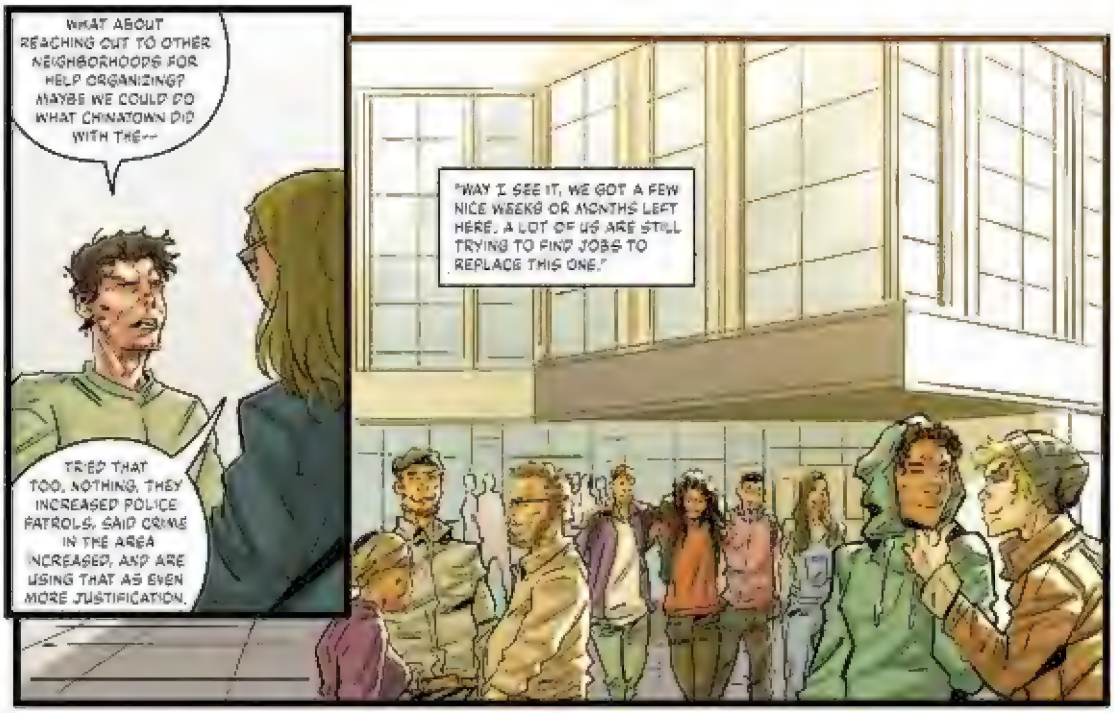
00:00:00
CRAP! TIME TO GO!
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
PHEW!
THAT WAS CLOSE. MAYBE THIS MEANS I CAN STAY PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS NOW.
AAAAND I WAS WRONG.
PHILADELPHIA: ~~2011~~ 2021

MILK RUN
Written by: Bryan Rebel
Art by: Jarro Kara
Colors by: Robert Nugent
Letters & Design by: Rob Jones
Edited by: James B Emmett
Oat milk?
(Big in 2018?)
Chicken thighs
Rice
Beans
Paper towels
Bread
Mayo
Perkins
Granola bars
(now crumbly and
WOWZER
BAR!!!
WOK

:GASP:
CRAP. HOW LONG WAS I OUT? I'M GONNA BE LATE.
MILK'S GONE. GOTTA GO BACK TOMORROW. DEFINITELY. CAN'T STAY PAST THE FULL TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. GOOD NOTE FOR NEXT TIME.
JUMPING BACK AS FAR AS I CAN AND WAITING UNTIL THE LAST SECOND ISN'T GREAT FOR MY HEALTH, OR MY WALLET...AT LEAST MOST OF THESE ARE OKAY.
I DON'T MIND A FORCED DIRT NAP IF I CAN SAVE TWO HUNDRED BUCKS ON GROCERIES. BUT IT'S A LIE TO SAY I FEEL FINE AFTER PASSING OUT.
MAYBE I SHOULD GRAB SOME WATER REAL QUICK...NO! FOCUS UP. I GOTTA GO. CAN'T AFFORD TO BE LATE AGAIN. BIG DAY PLANNED TODA--
AH! ALMOST FORGOT.


--DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M GONNA DO, I LOVE WORKING HERE AND NEED THIS JOB.
I KNOW, AND TO THINK THEY'RE TEARING IT DOWN JUST FOR MORE SHOPS NO ONE WILL GO TO?
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO GET THE KIND OF PEOPLE THEY WANT TO COME AROUND HERE...
HUH? WHA--? WHAT DID YOU SAY? WHAT'S CLOSING?
NOT JUST CLOSING. TEARING DOWN. CITY'S TEARING DOWN THE COMMUNITY CENTER AND YOUTH SERVICES HOME FOR THE KIDS.
YEAH, ALL FOR SOME MORE SHOPS AND PRETTY BUILDINGS THE MAYOR THINKS WILL FINALLY GET A PARK NAMED AFTER HIM SINCE HIS BILL PASSED.

I THOUGHT THE CITY COUNCIL WAS SOLID ON PRESERVING THE CENTER AND HOME AFTER THOSE MURDERS TEN YEARS AGO WHEN HE TRIED THE SAME THING. WHAT CHANGED?
APPARENTLY, TOURISM TOOK A BIG HIT LAST YEAR. AND IT'S NOT JUST BUSINESS OWNERS WHO'RE TAKING A LOSS NOW IF YOU CATCH MY DRIFT...
SO. THEIR BEST FIX IS CLOSING ONE OF THE FEW PLACES PEOPLE COUNT ON? CHILDCARE, COMMUNITY SPACES, THE HEALTH CLINIC, THE KITCHEN? AND THE KID'S HOME TOO? WHAT'RE THEY DOING WITH THE MONEY THEY CLAIM TO BE SAVING?
LAST I HEARD THEY'RE REDIRECTING SOME OF THE FUNDS SAVED TO PPD EXPANSION TO MONITOR THE NEW CONSTRUCTION. THE WHOLE PLAN SOUNDS LIKE A MINI CENTER CITY RIGHT HERE IN WEST PHILLY.
OH, THAT MAKES *PERFECT* SENSE. NEED MORE POLICE TO MAKE SURE THE COLLEGE KIDS AND UPPITY SUBURBAN TOURISTS ARE SAFE, RIGHT?
YEAH WE KNOW, NPR. THAT AIN'T ALL. WE'RE LOSING OUR JOBS, AND THE CITY IS *MIGHTY* QUIET ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE FOR US.
RIGHT...SORRY...ARE THERE ANY PROTESTS PLANNED OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT? MAYBE IF WE CAN GET SOME MOMENTUM GOING, WE CAN--
WHERE'VE YOU BEEN THE LAST FEW DAYS, SON? THERE WAS ONE, LAST WEEKEND, AND WE GOT STEAMROLLED OUT OF THERE. WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S BEEN SO EMPTY HERE?
CRAP, I-I'VE JUST BEEN BUSY WITH WORK AND...OTHER STUFF. I WOULD'VE BEEN HERE IF I KNEW, I--
HE'S JUST BUSTIN' YA, KID. WE KNOW YOU MEAN WELL. SOMETIMES THE FIGHT JUST GETS BURNED OUT OF PEOPLE...


WHAT ABOUT REACHING OUT TO OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS FOR HELP ORGANIZING? MAYBE WE COULD DO WHAT CHINATOWN DID WITH THE--
TRIED THAT TOO. NOTHING. THEY INCREASED POLICE PATROLS, SAID CRIME IN THE AREA INCREASED, AND ARE USING THAT AS EVEN MORE JUSTIFICATION.
"WAY I SEE IT, WE GOT A FEW NICE WEEKS OR MONTHS LEFT HERE. A LOT OF US ARE STILL TRYING TO FIND JOBS TO REPLACE THIS ONE."

"WHAT, YOU MEAN THIS IS HAPPENING *SOON*?"
YUP. I HEARD THEY'RE CLOSING THE HOME FIRST AND THE CENTER RIGHT AFTER THAT.

BUT HOW SOON?
I HEARD DEVELOPMENT STARTS THIS FALL. THEY WANT TO GET A MAJORITY DONE BEFORE COLD WEATHER HITS.
SO WHERE WILL THE KIDS GO?
"THEY'LL PROBABLY BE SENT ALL OVER."
"YEAH, I HEARD THEY'LL GO TO CHURCH-RUN HOMES IN LANCASTER AND EVEN SOME OVER IN JERSEY."
THIS... CAN'T BE HAPPENING. IF THEY CLOSE, THEN WHAT HAPPENS TO--

BENNY!
ZACK! YOU'RE HERE! BUT YOU ARE, LATE!
I KNOW, BUD, MY BAD, OF COURSE. I'M HERE. WHY WOULDN'T I BE?
BEN...C'MON, MAN. WHAT IS IT?
BECAUSE THE OTHER KIDS LEFT WITH THEIR BUDDIES AND THEY WERE MESSING WITH ME, SAYING YOU FORGOT ME...
I COULD NEVER FORGET YOU, DUDE. ESPECIALLY WHEN I'M SUPPOSED TO DELIVER AN EXTRA SECRET PACKAGE TODAY.
YOU GOT ANOTHER ONE?!
DO I EVER LET YOU DOWN?
HOW DO YOU KEEP FINDING THEM? THE OTHER KIDS SAID THEY STOPPED MAKING THEM FOREVER AGO!
OKAY, NO. THEY STOPPED MAKING THEM LIKE TEN YEARS AGO. AND ALSO, HOW OLD DO YOU THINK I AM?
UHHH...LIKE THIRTY-FOUR?
WRONG, I'M TWENTY-EIGHT. BUT I DID FIND A GRAY HAIR THE OTHER DAY... BUT I'LL LET IT SLIDE BECAUSE I'LL GET IN TROUBLE IF I FEED YOU TO A CROCODILE.
CROCODILE? DOES THAT MEAN WE'RE GOING TO--

"YOU KNOW IT. THE ZOO!"
SOOOO... IT'S A TALL WOLF?
NOT EXACTLY, IT'S RELATED TO FOXES AND WOLVES, BUT ACTUALLY, IT'S THE ONLY SPECIES IN ITS FAMILY TREE. ITS SCIENTIFIC NAME MEANS "GOLDEN DOG."
WHY IS IT YOUR FAVORITE?
I-I JUST THINK THEY'RE NEAT...
CAN WE GO SEE SOMETHING COOL LIKE A SNAKE NOW?
I TAKE IT BACK. I'M FEEDING YOU TO A CROCODILE.
NOOOO!
BENNY, I'M SORRY FOR THIS MORNING AND THAT THE OTHER KIDS TEASED YOU. I DON'T HAVE A GOOD EXCUSE FOR BEING LATE, I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW I'M SORRY ABOUT IT AND HOW IT MADE YOU FEEL.
"IT'S OKAY. I'M JUST GLAD I GET TO DO STUFF WITH YOU. IT MAKES STAYING IN THE HOME A BIT BETTER WHEN I GET TO LEAVE AND SEE STUFF. ESPECIALLY COOL STUFF WITH YOU.
DO YOU KNOW WHERE I'M GONNA GO?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? LIKE AFTER TODA--
NO. WHEN THEY CLOSE THE HOME.

WHERE'D YOU HEAR THAT?
THE COMMUNITY CENTER STAFF. THEY'RE REALLY BAD AT WHISPERING.
HMMPH. MAYBE THEY'LL SEND YOU OVER TO JERSEY AND WE CAN WAVE TO EACH OTHER--
DON'T EVEN JOKE ABOUT THAT.

SO WHERE DO YOU THINK I'LL GO?
...I DON'T KNOW. I'M SURE THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER NICE HOMES AROUND.
MAYBE YOU'LL GET TO GO SOMEWHERE COOL, AND NOT JERSEY.
I CAN'T LEAVE THE CITY.
I KNOW IT'S TOUGH, PAL. BUT SOMETIMES YOU GOTTA LOOK ON THE BRIGHTER SIDE--
NO!
BENNY, I--
I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE WITHOUT MY PARENTS!

I KNOW THEY'RE GONE, BUT THEY NEVER CAUGHT THE GUY WHO HURT THEM. IF I LEAVE, THEN IT'S LIKE THEY'RE GONE FOREVER. BECAUSE NO ONE WHO CARES IS LEFT TO FIGURE IT OUT.

LIVING HERE IS ALL I HAVE LEFT OF THEM. I DON'T REMEMBER THEM REALLY. BUT I MISS THEM SO MUCH.
ALL I HAVE ARE SOME PICTURES AND GET TOLD ABOUT THE GOOD THEY DID.
IT'S NOT FAIR.

I KNOW, BUDDY. IT'S OKAY...

"...YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO MISSES THEM."
PHILADELPHIA: 2011
BOOP
"AND WE'RE BACK. THANKS FOR LISTENING TO THOSE ADS. OKAY, SUMMER, EVERY BIT HELPS. LET'S GO OVER THE FACTS.
"...OF THE UNSOLVED MURDERS OF TWO OF PHILADELPHIA'S PROMINENT SOCIAL WORK ACTIVISTS: MARIA AND GABRIEL WINTERS.
"HERE'S WHAT WE KNOW: FOLLOWING DINNER WITH AN UNKNOWN PARTY, THE COUPLE WAS WALKING THROUGH RITTENHOUSE SQUARE WHEN THE ASSAILANT CAME UPON THEM, ACCOSTED THE PAIR, AND SHOT THEM BOTH.
"FOLLOWING THE MURDERS, POLICE FAILED TO FIND ANY TRACE OF THE KILLER, FOR NOT A COLD CASE. THE AUTHORITIES ARE LEFT WONDERING WHO THE WINTERS DINED WITH BEFORE THEIR DEATHS..

...AND WHAT HAVE THEY NEVER COME FORWARD?
WHEN WE COME BACK, WE'LL PRESENT THE IMPORTANT PART THE WINTERS PLAYED IN TRYING TO PROTECT [illegible] SOCIAL PROGRAMS
...AND INVESTIGATE WHAT MOTIVE SOMEONE COULD HAVE TO--
BA-BOOP
BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE DEAD...
FOR A WHILE, I THOUGHT THEY JUST BLEW ME OFF. I HAD TO FIND OUT FROM SOME LAME TRUE CRIME PODCAST THAT THEY WERE GONE.
THE NUMBER OF TIMES I'VE LISTENED TO IT...
...JUST TO COME BACK HERE TO WITNESS IT ALL AGAIN. FOR THREE YEARS I'VE BEEN ABLE TO JUMP, AND I ONLY JUST LEARNED ABOUT THEIR DEATHS EIGHT MONTHS AGO. SOME FRIEND I CLAIMED TO BE.
WON'T EVEN GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE WHO DID IT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENS IF I GET HURT OR KILLED WHILE I'M HERE, BUT I ASSUME IT CAN'T BE GOOD. AH--HERE COMES THE WORST PART.

I WOULD SAY IT GOT EASIER. BUT THAT JUST MEANS I DON'T CRY WHEN I SEE IT HAPPEN ANYMORE.
AND WHEN I DECIDE TO GO BACK FAR ENOUGH TO ENJOY SOME TIME WITH THEM, IT'S LIKE TALKING TO GHOSTS BECAUSE I KNOW WHAT COMES NEXT.
IT HURTS NOT BEING ABLE TO TELL ANYONE. NOT BEING ABLE TO TELL BENNY THAT I COULD SOLVE IT ALL IF I JUST TRIED. INSTEAD, I HAVE TO FAKE IT AND LISTEN TO HIS HEART BREAK.
BLAM!
BLAM!
I THINK THAT MAY BE WHAT MAKES ME THE MADDEST. I HAVE ALL THIS KNOWLEDGE AND POWER BUT CAN'T SEEM TO DO ANYTHING WORTH A DAMN WITH IT.
WELL, AFTER THE ZOO TODAY, MAYBE IT'S TIME FOR THAT TO CHANGE.

WHEN IT STARTED, I THOUGHT THE FIRST THING TO DO WAS PREVENT THE BAD THINGS BEFORE THEY HAPPENED...
...ONLY TO LEARN THAT ONCE TRAGEDY STRIKES, IT STAYS, AT LEAST IN MY TIMELINE.
SO, THEN I THOUGHT I COULD SKIP THE PAIN AND HELP THOSE WHO SUFFERED ESCAPE IT, BUT FIRST...I NEEDED TO TEST IT.
CHEEP
CHEEP
I FELT TERRIBLE, BUT I GUESS I'D RATHER IT BE A BIRD THAN SOMEONE'S LOVED ONE.
AND AFTER ALL OF THAT, I DECIDED WHAT I AM AND WHAT I COULD DO WITH THESE GIFTS.
YOUR TOTAL TODAY IS $45.58. CASH OR CARD?
I'M NOTHING MORE THAN A TOURIST, RETURNING WITH SOME SOUVENIRS AND A FEW BUCKS SAVED.

AND THIS? THIS FEELS LIKE I'M REWATCHING THE SAME CHEESY CRIME DOCUMENTARY.
PLENTY OF TIME LEFT, BUT I'VE SEEN ENOUGH FOR TONIGHT.
I USED TO LOVE COMING HERE WHEN I FIRST MOVED TO THE CITY, ESPECIALLY THIS TIME OF YEAR...
PHILADELPHIA: 2021
...BUT EVEN BACK IN THE PRESENT, I STILL SEE THE GHOSTS.

HAVE YOU LISTENED TO THAT PODCAST ABOUT MY PARENTS?

NO...I HAVEN'T... HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT IT?

HMM.

INTERNET.

HAVE *YOU* LISTENED TO IT?

NO. NO ONE WILL LET ME.

THAT'S PROBABLY FOR THE BEST...

ON SATURDAY IT WILL BE TEN YEARS, JUST LIKE THE AD SAID FOR THE SHOW.

YEAH...HARD TO BELIEVE IT'S ALREADY HERE.

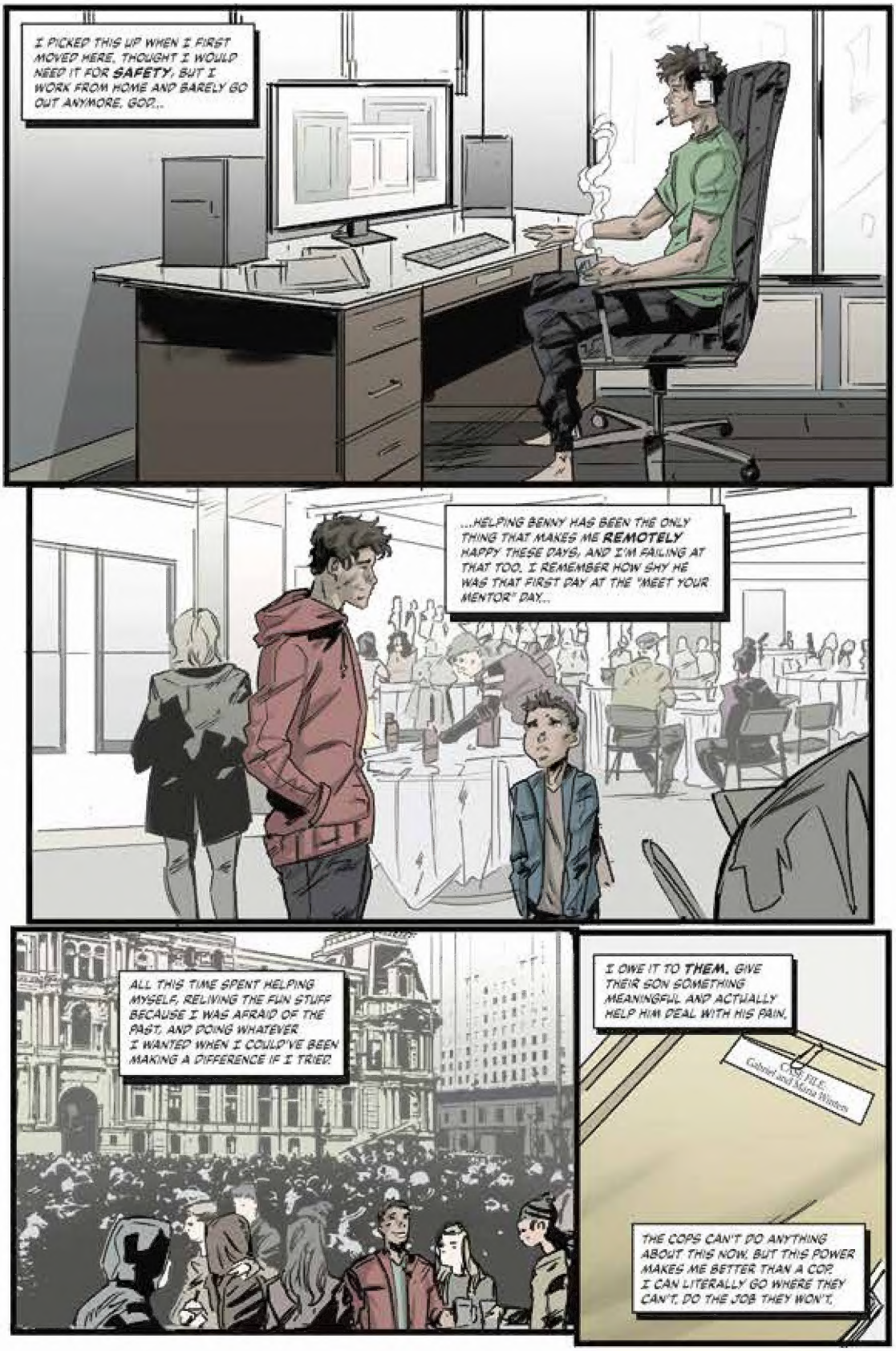
WHAT?

IS--DO YOU *WANT* TO LISTEN TO IT?

NOT ALONE...

WILL YOU LISTEN WITH ME?

"I'M SORRY, PAL...I-I DON'T THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA."
"THAT'S...OKAY. I DON'T WANT TO MAKE YOU SAD TOO. THEN WHO WOULD CHEER ME UP?"
TEN YEARS. THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO VISIT A PLACE IN THE PAST. ONCE A DECADE PASSES...I CAN NEVER GO BACK.
I'VE HAD ALL THIS TIME TO DO SOMETHING WORTHWHILE, AND INSTEAD, I'VE JUST SAT AROUND LIVING LIKE A CHEAPSKATE AND HAVING FUN.
I'VE GOTTA DEAL WITH THIS BECAUSE IF I DON'T...COME SATURDAY, I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SEE THEM AGAIN, I WON'T BE ABLE TO FIND OUT WHO DID IT, AND BENNY WILL...
SLAM


I PICKED THIS UP WHEN I FIRST MOVED HERE. THOUGHT I WOULD NEED IT FOR SAFETY, BUT I WORK FROM HOME AND BARELY GO OUT ANYMORE. GOD...
...HELPING BENNY HAS BEEN THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES ME REMOTELY HAPPY THESE DAYS, AND I'M FAILING AT THAT TOO. I REMEMBER HOW SHY HE WAS THAT FIRST DAY AT THE "MEET YOUR MENTOR" DAY...
ALL THIS TIME SPENT HELPING MYSELF, RELIVING THE FUN STUFF BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID OF THE PAST, AND DOING WHATEVER I WANTED WHEN I COULD'VE BEEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE IF I TRIED.
I OWE IT TO THEM. GIVE THEIR SON SOMETHING MEANINGFUL AND ACTUALLY HELP HIM DEAL WITH HIS PAIN.
CASE FILE
Gabriel and Maria Winters
THE COPS CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THIS NOW, BUT THIS POWER MAKES ME BETTER THAN A COP. I CAN LITERALLY GO WHERE THEY CAN'T, DO THE JOB THEY WON'T,

NO MORE GHOSTS.
NO MORE GUILT.
TIME FOR IT TO END.
CH-CLACK CLICK!

IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON FROM ALL THIS. TIME TO FIX IT. TIME TO MAKE IT RIGHT.
I WANT TO GO BACK TO HOW IT WAS BEFORE.
BEFORE I MET THEM. BEFORE I CARED ABOUT BENNY. I JUST WANT MY LIFE BACK. I WANT TO GIVE HIM HIS. NO MORE PAIN FOR EITHER OF US.
WHATEVER IT TAKES. EVERYONE GETS WHAT THEY DESERVE AFTER THIS.
I'LL EITHER FIND A WAY OR MAKE ONE.

NEXT TIME: MEET THE PARENTS!

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